



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



January 22, 2002

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Governor

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J. Dale Givens  
Secretary

### **DEQ Monitors Industrial Testing Accident at the CITGO Refinery near Lake Charles**

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was notified on Friday, January 18, 2002, of an accident involving radioactive materials in the CITGO Refinery near Lake Charles. The source of radiation was being used by a contractor to examine components inside a steel container. Environmental scientists from DEQ responded and reported that it appeared the equipment being used by an industrial radiography crew contacted an electrical circuit, which caused the source to rupture.

The radioisotope, Iridium 192, was contained in a steel capsule approximately 1/4 inch by 1 inch in size and was attached to a cable which apparently came into contact with an electrical current. The capsule ruptured, releasing contamination inside the container where it was being used.

Several workers were determined to have contaminated shoes, and one worker had contamination on his hand. External contamination was removed following the event. Tests for ingested contamination are being performed today.

Both the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the US Department of Energy have been notified and are assisting in the investigation as requested, along with DEQ environmental scientists who are monitoring the site. The US Department of Energy in Oak Ridge, Tennessee is expected to provide dose assessments to determine potential health consequences if whole body scans indicate internal deposition.

DEQ will continue to investigate and gather information on the incident.

For further information, please contact Jim Friloux at (225) 765-0735.